

Healthy Relationships Case Study

Organization:	First Things First (FTF), Chattanooga, TN
URL:	www.FirstThings.org
Program Name:	Connections
Funding:	Healthy Marriage Grant (OFA)
Curricula used:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections: Dating and Emotions 7 hours • Money Habitudes for Teens 1 hour
Curricula benefits:	<p>Connections: Dating and Emotions – The participants enjoy the lesson on how to start a conversation. This lesson begins where the teens are, while at the same time creating openness and connections to get the conversation going. A question-based format instead of lecturing is used.</p> <p>Money Habitudes for Teens is a behavioral awareness approach to money that can change behavior but is also fun for the teens. FTF also uses the Connections: Relationships and Marriage budget activity to help students learn what people tend to spend in different budget categories.</p>
Target Audience:	<p>FTF targets every 9th grade student in Hamilton County by teaching Connections: Dating and Emotions in a required health and wellness class.</p> <p>FTF is also invited to do special student presentations.</p> <p>FTF reaches approximately 80% of their target population, which translates to about 5,000 – 6,000 students per year.</p>
Audience Demographics:	<p>Poverty: 16.8% of the students are living at or below the poverty line.</p> <p>Primary Ethnicity: 76% Caucasian, 20% African American, 2% Hispanic, and 2% other.</p>
Class size:	<p>FTF teaches in a classroom of 30-35 students or larger classes in a gym. Because of the higher number of students in a gym, experiential activities are incorporated to keep the students engaged.</p> <p>They may send two teachers to larger classes or send genderspecific teachers as requested.</p>

Location of instruction:	Public schools
Length of instruction (number of sessions and hours per session):	Six 90 minute sessions or Eight 1 hour sessions on consecutive days.
Instructors:	The instructors are trained FTF staff.
Instructor Training Protocol:	FTF staff trains new FTF instructors in the materials.
Utilization of teacher and student materials:	FTF utilizes the accompanying student journal in their classes. Student journals are distributed on the first day, and the students sign their name in their journal. Journals can be taken home or left at the school depending on the teachers' preference.
Program Recruitment Process:	From the beginning of their grant, FTF started recruiting teachers to allow FTF staff to teach in their classrooms. FTF continues to build relationships with teachers and grow the program. FTF staff goes to the school district's professional development day to schedule, with the classroom teachers, an appropriate time for the program to be taught.
Incentives to teachers and students:	Students get a t-shirt upon completion.
Tips:	<p>Summer programming ideas:</p> <p>FTF reaches teens during the summer by partnering with a local company, The Adventure Guild, which does a ropes course.</p> <p>Relationship classes are integrated into the ropes courses: 5 hours of relationship skills training with an additional 3 hours of experiential relationship skills training using the ropes course.</p> <p>Experiential learning is used to teach about trust and making healthy decisions. Adding experiential learning activities at the beginning of a lesson helps engage students in the learning process.</p> <p>FTF offers summer classes at local recreational centers and other community organizations.</p>